

Statement by Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) – *The following is a statement by Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL), Chairman of the Immigration Task Force of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, who attended a meeting today at the White House with the President, Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and Reps. Xavier Becerra (D-CA), Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX) and Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) to discuss immigration reform in the wake of the Republican-led filibuster that effectively killed the DREAM Act for this Congress.*

We had a good meeting and were able to debrief about the very disappointing DREAM Act result in the Senate. The President shares our frustration that, despite winning strong bipartisan majorities in both chambers, a handful of Senators were able to block the DREAM Act. It is disillusioning that Republicans who once championed the DREAM Act hid behind procedural excuses or just plain flip-flopped and voted to kill this important bill and the hopes and dreams of so many students and young people.

The President knows that immigration reform and the DREAM Act are struggles that continue and he indicated he wanted to meet with us again right after the New Year to map out strategy. With the Republicans taking over in the House, whose leaders are strongly opposed to immigration and immigration reform, we will likely be playing a great deal of defense for the next two years. Obviously, the President's veto pen is a crucial weapon against radically anti-immigrant policies.

At the same time, we cannot afford to be content with just a defensive struggle, fighting attempts to make legal immigration and legality for immigrants harder than they already are. At the current rate, another 800,000 people will be deported by the time November 2012 comes around, which does nothing to fix our immigration system and rips apart communities and families and the very fabric of our society. The President understands how important this issue is to the Latino community so we have to work together to make progress as soon as possible.

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